7: Speck E-5 (1928-1932) 1937 NM7 Delaware NM7
Lenape



worship in the Big House. I might add, as contributing a view-point on the same perplexing question, that early in the eighteenth century the missionary Brainerd, then living with the Delawares on the upper Susquehanna in their village near Sunbury, reported a conversation with a man of the Nation in which was embodied a similar opinion as regards the False Face.

In a section of my study of the Big House Ceremony I indulged in quoting some estimates of the religious spirit among the Delawares adding some of my own impressions in the matter. An opportunity to add to these, since it comes from the writings of a contemporary witness over a century ago when the tribe was resident on the Scioto River, comes from John Brickell. He says: "I know I am influenced to good even at this day more from what I learned among them than what I learned among people of my own color. . . . They worship the Great Spirit whom they call manito, which signifies or conveys to their mind the idea of all strength or rather all sufficiency." [1] This commentary may be adjoined as a supplement to the section in the work referred to, dealing also with the native concept of the Great Spirit, as something corroborative of the early belief of this tribe in the existence of a supreme deity and is intended for the eyes of authorities such as Dr. Schmidt who have devoted so much attention to the nativity of the concept in American culture.

In the study of the Big House Ceremony some space was devoted to the construction of the belief regarding the path taken by the soul in its journey from earth to the spirit realm. The assumption was made that the Milky Way was considered to be the path in question. Yet the inability on the part of several sources to furnish the native term applied to the Milky Way and their uncertainty as to what symbol in the sky represented the path of the spirit left the matter in a state of doubt. The fact that among other Algonkian peoples the Milky Way is "Spirit or Ghost Path" has some bearing on the point that we are trying to clear up in Delaware belief. It remained for inquiry among the Delaware-Munsee of the Six

[1] "Narrative of John Brickell's Captivity among the Delaware Indians," *The American Pioneer*, I, 2d ed., Cincinnati, 1842, pp. 43, 46, 48, 56.

7: Speck E-5 (1928-1932) 1937 NM7 Delaware NM7
Lenape



[796] To prepare for a Mask Ceremony the owner of the mask must arrange for the same by setting a certain day and announcing the time when such a dance is to be held. He must have the maize (*xaskwi·'m*) and flour-corn (*pu'he·'m*) [1] to make Indian bread and hominy for the feast after the dance.

A young active and experienced dancer is chosen to do the dancing with the *mas·i'ɣg* (mask) outfit. He performs his antics and dances alone. As to the wearer of the mask during the dance only those who have charge of the ceremony know his identity. [781] It is deliberately kept a secret from the younger people in order to impress them with awe for supernatural forces and to restrain them from unruliness or boisterousness.

Any clan chief or an old man accustomed to speaking may act, by invitation of the mask owner, as master of ceremony. He is generally a member of one of the two ceremonial groups other than that of the mask owner. He receives one Indian "yard" of wampum beads for his services. [765] The dance, which is usually held at night time, is begun about midnight, and as soon as the performances are over with they have the feast. First of all the master of ceremony announces the purpose of the gathering. The owner of the mask in the wind-up says, "We have now finished dancing with our grandfather, and shared with him in this hominy. So, should we have the good fortune to be living next year, we may have another dance. But now when we are through eating we may dance long as we please with all good intent and purpose providing we keep good order, which is very pleasing to the mask spirit as well as to the owner of the mask."

[535] The mask performance is followed by a night of social dancing as is usual with the Delaware feasting ceremonies. The masking clownish pantomime is brought to a conclusion about midnight by a more or less set speech by the master of ceremony and the feast of hominy.

[796] [533] The musical accompaniment consists in the singing of the

the large Snapping Turtle rattle, the rough staff, the whinnying utterances, the offering of tobacco, the association with illness and so on. For further particulars reference should be made to the Big House Ceremony study at the pages cited.

[1] A variety of white maize with a long slender cob.

7:Speck E-5 (1928-1932) 1937 NM7 Delaware NM7
Lenape



among the Delawares are provided from his memory. They may serve as a base of comparison with the type of performance recorded among other tribes of the same cultural group when time comes to consider the history of the game. We learn, for instance, that the players started with four moccasins on each side but that towards morning the women took away one moccasin, leaving them three under which to hide the cartridge or bullet. Later, in the early hours of the morning another moccasin was taken away, later another until only one remained on each side and the players were unable to continue. One of the older women, Mrs. Minnie Fouts, who had taken part in this rite, corroborated the information of Joe Washington and added some of the details put on record. As the moccasins were taken away one by one during the course of the night, it was a signal for a change in the repertoire of songs in the series. It was added in explanation of taking away the moccasins that the men were induced to cease the game by this gradual method, lest they play too long. The element of wagering on the outcome of the moccasin game was stricken out when the game came to be used in the funeral rite, though previously betting was carried on by the Delawares when the game was an independent celebration for amusement. The reason for introducing the moccasin game into the funeral program was to provide a means of keeping the party awake and in good spirits while they were sitting up with the dead person during the nights between the time of decease and burial. Levity was customary during the playing of the game, yet this did not seem to interfere with the spirit of the funeral, it being intended to lighten the grief of those who were paying their last duties to the deceased.[1]

### THE RING AND PIN GAME

*Koko'lac* (meaning not clear).—The following game, the name of which is not as descriptive as it might be although

[1] In the account of the Moccasin Game given by R. C. Adams ("Legends of the Delaware Indians," Washington, 1905, p. 47), some of the songs accompanying the rite are transcribed. It is doubtful whether any more of these scores could be secured at the present time.

+ = element present
− = element denied
(+) or (−) = source ambiguous
• = informant could not or would not say
s = some, sometimes, or several
† or * = see Ethnographic Notes, pp. 79-137 for additional information

| | | Williams | Van der Donck | Lindeström | Zeisberger | Heckewelder | Johnston | Pipe | Chipps | J. W. | W. T. | E. R. | W. L. |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | | | | | | | | 683 | 684 | 627 | 632 |
| | | | | | | | | | | 685 | 686 | 634 | 781 |
| | | | | | | | | | | | | 633 | 635 |
| | *Chiefs—Continued* | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 237. | War chief chosen through vision power | | | | + | + | | | | + | + | + | + |
| 238. | Body of counselors † | + | + | | + | + | + | + | + | + | + | + | + |
| 239. | Name *upwaenowuk | | | | | | | + | | (+) | + | • | + |
| 240. | Chosen by people | | | | | | + | + | | + | + | + | + |
| 241. | Consider all matters of importance to tribe | | + | | + | + | + | + | + | + | + | + | + |
| 242. | Counselors and chiefs only present at council meetings | | s? | | s | s | + | + | | s | s | s | s |
| 243. | All adults except women admitted | | | | s | | | | + | + | s | s | s |
| | *Justice* | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| 244. | Any mode of compelling payment of debt | | | | + | | − | − | − | − | − | − | − |
| 245. | Relatives of debtor make restitution | | | | + | + | | s | | + | | + | + |
| 246. | Creditor uses force | | | | | | | s | + | •+ | | + | − |
| 247. | Redress for civil injuries (theft) | •+ | + | + | + | + | − | − | − | + | − | + | + |
| 248. | Injured party applies to chief | | + | | | | | + | | + | | + | − |
| 249. | Any punishment inflicted by nation if restitution is made | | − | | − | − | − | − | − | − | − | − | + |
| 250. | Injured party has right to kill thief on second offense | | − | | | + | | | + | + | | + | + |
| 251. | Murder punished | + | + | + | + | + | + | + | + | + | + | + | + |
| 252. | By nation | + | − | + | − | − | − | − | − | + | + | − | + |
| 253. | Breach closed by presents | | + | | + | /+ | + | + | + | + | + | • | + |
| 254. | Amount of wampum as presents † | | | | | • | + | + | + | + | + | + | + |
| 255. | Lacking presents, revenge by relatives | + | + | + | | + | + | + | + | + | − | − | • |
| 256. | Revenge duty of any individual | | •+ | | | − | − | − | − | •+ | − | • | s |
| 257. | Any one interfere from duty | | •+ | | | | − | • | − | − | • | • | − |
| 258. | Guilty submits | + | •− | | | | + | + | + | + | + | + | + |
| 259. | Feud arise from revenge | | •+ | | | | | − | − | − | − | • | − |
| 260. | Revenge approved by nation | + | | + | + | | + | | | + | + | + | + |
| 261. | Crimes. Theft | + | + | | + | + | + | + | + | + | + | + | + |
| 262. | Rape | | + | | | | | + | | + | + | • | |
| 263. | Adultery | + | + | | + | | | + | + | + | + | + | |
| 264. | Desertion of children | | | | | | | | + | + | (+) | | |
| 265. | Drunkenness and slander | + | | | | | | | + | + | (+) | | |

9: Kinietz E-4, 5 (1938) 1946
NM7 Delaware NM7



621 a nephew, his sister's son, or sister's daughter's son. The se-
614 lection of a successor might be made by an incumbent with the approval of the people. Each of the three divisions had a chief who was chosen by a general council of chiefs and wisemen, possibly with the exclusion of the tribal chiefs and wisemen of the division involved. The installation of the tribal chief was conducted by the head chiefs of the other two divisions.

643 The various sources and informants were unanimous in saying that there was a boundary between the authority of the civil chief and that of the war chief (232). The superiority of the civil chief in peace time was also affirmed by all (233). The reversal of the relative power of each in war was likewise maintained without dissent (234). Power received through visions
[781] was a prerequisite to the office of war chief (237). Captain Pipe's account made no mention of vision power, but his statement of an election similar to that of a civil chief did not preclude this requirement. W. L. stated that a man must have received power through a vision to become eligible for election as a war chief.

623 The existence of a body of wisemen or counselors was reported in every period (238). These men were chosen by the people, according to the information from the third and fourth periods (240). The accounts of the earlier periods did not touch upon this matter. The council or body of wisemen was reported throughout all periods to consider all matters of importance to the tribe (241). The functions of the council were evidently considerable; although called only by the chief, their decision after due deliberation determined the course of action of the chief (238). Women had no voice in council and were only admitted at certain times (243).

### *Justice*

681 According to the idealistic retrospect of W. T., originally, when the Delaware had things their own way, there was no theft, murder, rape, adultery, or any other crime or misdemeanor and hence no punishments or ways of handling such matters were
006 necessary. Since debts were not discussed in detail in the first

9: Kinietz E-4, 5 (1938) 1946
NM7 Delaware NM7



visible noticing all their actions, which he communicates to the next deity and so from one to the other until it is communicated to the Supreme being. 776

CAPTAIN PIPE—With the Indian (these Indians) all animals, and even animated nature, Trees, plants, etc., are considered as beings having supernatural powers. This is proved to be a serious belief by the great distinction in the language, which included trees, plants and some vegetables in the class of animated beings, and by the superstitious notions of these men, who having been prepared by excessive fatigue, long fasting and harsh treatment [783] from parents, for some unnatural excitement of the mind, dream, or fancy that they dream of seeing their guardian god coming [781] to them in the form of a Bear, Wolf, the Sun, the Moon, a Tree, etc., and directing them about their future conduct. Such [787] dream no doubt has great effect during the life of its subject, and in his private worship all his songs are descriptive of some of the events which he saw in his dream. He often repeats them and does not fail to attribute his success to the deity whose wonderful appearance had foretold his good fortune, or any mishap [788] to his own bad conduct which incensed his guardian.

*23. Evil spirits*

JOHN JOHNSTON—They believe in but one evil spirit which is the devil. They suppose him to have been created holy, but he being proud spirited was not willing to acknowledge the creation of all things to the supreme being but contended that he had created the bad and the dispute arose to such a degree that the devil took a disgust and plunged himself from heaven into the earth where he remains to this day and that is the reason (they say) why guilty folk always look down. 776 773

CAPTAIN PIPE—Much of their unhappiness and misfortune is attributed to the evil spirits of which there are many. They are called *Maatseetseet Maunutoowuk*, (Those who are bad Spirits) but are not distinguished by particular appellations. 776

CAPTAIN CHIPPS—They believe that "there is a devil, or there would not be so many wicked in the world,"—where he lives they cannot determine.

9: Kinietz E-4, 5 (1938) 1946
NM7 Delaware NM7



do so in pretty regular succession, the worship is annual, or perhaps more frequent. The time and place of meeting is designated by this family, the principal male of which sends a messenger to the chief or head man of each village, who in his turn disseminates the information through the families of those under him. At the time appointed the nation, as well males as females assemble at a large lodge prepared for the purpose, where the females are placed in rear of the men. Here with grave and downcast looks they sit and receive from one of the old men an address upon the importance of a due observance of the ceremonies of the worship, and of abstinence from all unlawful pleasures during the continuance of them, among which any connection with women is counted a polluting sin. After describing at length the customs of their ancestors, among which this worship is placed in the foreground, the principal man of those who prepared the place of worship, having in his hand a small turtle shell containing a few gravel stones, gives it a sudden shake, and at the signal the worshipers all rise. He then commences a history of his early dream, repeating it in short sentences, in a natural tone of voice and being followed in the repetition of each sentence by all who are in the house. At length he commences to sing his dream, being followed by the company as before, and relieved between the sentences by a chorus of singers who are seated apart from the other worshipers, and have a kind of tambourin composed of a deer skin stretched across four sticks, upon which they beat the time. The music is said to be agreeable and very soft.

After this person has finished the tale of his dream, in which is described minutely every circumstance connected with the appearance of his tutelar deity, as well as those events of his life, which being foretold, have *of course* come to pass, each person in the lodge takes him by the hand in a mystical manner and they all seat themselves. The men then smoke for a short time, preserving the utmost silence and gravity of deportment, during which occupation the speaker takes occasion to push the shell under his legs in a secret manner, to the next on his right, who declares his intention to speak by giving it a slight shake, or pushes it in the same secret way to the next. When one has

9: Kinietz E-4, 5 (1938) 1946
NM7 Delaware NM7



W. T.—Originally there was no war, hence no peace rules until after whites introduced war. William Penn made a treaty with the Delaware. The delegates (chief, assistant chief, war chief, and councilors) at this and later treaties, met, and talked things over, smoked just like businessmen do today. The white delegates were given food just like Indians always feed any visitors. At the Penn treaty they ate turkey. Thanksgiving day among the whites commemorates this first turkey feast. 721 728

*429. Flag of truce* 728

J. W. said that a flag of truce was something blue.

GAMES

*432. Football*

J. W. and W. T. said football was taken over recently from Shawnee. 526

W. L. said that the football game was played with the women against the men. There were two goal posts on the east side and two on the west. Each side tried to send the ball between the posts of the other side. The men had to kick the ball but the women could throw it. Once they appointed a man to help the women. He was mobbed and that was not tried again.

*436. Cards*

ROGER WILLIAMS reported a game like English cards in which rushes were used instead of cards. 525

VAN DER DONCK said that they played a game with pieces of reeds, resembling our card playing.

W. L. said that seven-up was the favorite game.

*441. Hopping*

W. T. stated that the game was to see who could cover the most ground in three hops. 524

*442. Lifting stones*

W. T. said that contests of lifting stones in the old days were really trials of the vision power of the different individuals, for 781 526

9: Kinietz E-4, 5 (1938) 1946
NM7 Delaware NM7



781 in those days some through their power were able to lift stones
526 weighing over a thousand pounds with one hand.

*447. Moccasin game*

524 JOHN JOHNSTON described the moccasin game as follows with-
525 out any mention of its connection with the wake of a deceased person:

Moccasin is commenced by placing a blanket or two upon the ground, placing four moccasins upon the blankets. A small ball is made use of. They draw cuts to know which party has the ball first. One of the party that it falls to hides it under one of those moccasins and one of the other party looks for it, if the ball is under the moccasin he first draws, he had found it, if not one of the same party hides it again and it counts one in their tally, or if he turns over last he has found it and one of his party hides it, but if it is not under the one he first draws or if he turns them up and it is not under the one that he turns up last, it is considered not found and the same party hides it. The party that has the ball to hide sings and the other party is silent. For their tally they use three balls or sticks and every time the ball is hid and not found by the other party, one of those balls or sticks is given to the party that hid it until the three come together which is game and the party that has the balls has beat. They agree how many games they will play for the property that is at stake. They frequently make large bets upon this kind of game especially when one tribe plays against another.

All the modern informants reported this game being played only the night before a funeral.

## DANCES

*448 and 449. Worshiping and common or corn dance*

535 JOHN JOHNSTON—They had originally but two and one of them has been described in their mode of worship the other is conducted in similar manner, but they think of less consequence. At this dance the men all dance in front, the women in the rear in a single file at this dance. They have two that sing and beat

11:Newcomb E-5 (1952)1956 NM7 Delaware NM7



with an ordinary kitchen broom. After midnight the ashes were removed from the fire whenever a considerable quantity had accumulated.

The road-chief prayed, peyote was passed, and the songs began again. The throb of the drum and the songs were interrupted only occasionally; someone would ask for peyote, a person would mumble, and once one of the Winnebagos (No. 16, Fig. 1) asked the road-chief for permission to attempt a cure of his wife's swollen feet. This request was granted. The Winnebago walked around the fireplace and altar in a clockwise direction and cedar needles were thrown on the fire. He "caught" the smoke in a feather and dipped it into a cup of water which he had in readiness. He then brushed the feather over the woman's legs, concentrating on her feet. He drew a faintly glowing ember from the fire, took the ash into his mouth, and spit the ash into the ash pile nearest him. He then vigorously sucked the patient's feet.

Also early in the morning the Delaware sponsor asked the road-chief if she could pray for herself and her family. He assented. Standing next to the altar, she smoked a corn husk cigarette and, with tears streaming down her cheeks, related first in English and then in Delaware the story of her illness, her unhappiness, and her desire for the good health of her family. A little later a woman (No. 10 in Fig. 1) asked if she might be allowed to sing. Permission being given, she sang the customary four songs, her husband drumming for her.

At dawn the road-chief announced that the drum was going around for the last time. Following this last round the sponsor, her husband and young daughter (who had awakened and come into the tepee) stood up. The road-chief cast cedar needles upon the fire and brushed the entire bodies of the family with his eagle feather fan in the customary way. He then prayed. After they had resumed their seats the road-chief prayed again, following which candy and crackers were passed. The meeting was closed by the assemblage reciting the Lord's Prayer. The fire-chief rose and went around the tepee in the clockwise direction shaking everyone's hand and congratulating them on a successful meeting. The person on his left followed him in a like manner, and so on until everybody had shaken hands with everyone else and the tepee was emptied. Coffee was made and the participants relaxed in the yard and talked until the noon meal, after which the group dispersed.

It is difficult, perhaps impossible, to convey the attitude of peyotists and the atmosphere of a peyote meeting by means of a description of what happens during the course of the night. Perhaps the general

11:Newcomb E-5 (1952) 1956 NM7 Delaware NM7



attitude is best summed up as one of intense emotion and reverence. It could hardly be otherwise, since any individual may come face to face with supernatural powers during the course of the ceremony. Even if he does not, he has come to the ceremony in the sincere belief that he can and will get help in solving the most serious of life's problems. This precludes a profane attitude. I can only echo Petrullo (1934: 88) who said that the atmosphere of the ceremony was "... accompanied by the deepest feeling of reverence and awe and peace that it has been my lot to have witnessed either among primitive people or Christian groups engaged in worshipping their God."

Peyote is of course the focal point of the peyote meeting, but peyote itself is not worshipped. Informants stress this again and again, probably because they have so frequently been attacked by Whites and Christian Indians on this point. Peyote is both a symbol of the supernatural forces being worshipped and a sacrament. For the Delaware peyotist it is a means of establishing contact with the supernatural world and of securing a personally satisfactory working relationship with the spirit forces. While Peyote is the most important supernatural force present, it is not the only one. The spiritual forces of Sun, Moon, Fire, and others are there. Their importance and even their existence depends upon individual interpretation (Fig. 1).

The outward emphasis of Delaware peyote meetings is upon curing. The stated purpose of the meeting I have described was to assist in the cure of the sponsor, and there was a shamanistic curing rite performed during the course of the evening. It should also be pointed out that many peyotists are eager to relate how peyote has cured them of various diseases. It would be a mistake, however, to regard Big Moon peyotism as merely a curing rite, or even to think of it as primarily so. Peyote is regarded as a spirit force through which men can approach the omnipotent supernatural power or powers. Informants sometimes equate peyote with Jesus and say that White men use the "Jesus road to God" while the "Indian takes the Peyote Road."

### BIG MOON PEYOTISM—THEN AND NOW

Unfortunately Petrullo did not attend a Big Moon meeting with the Delawares near Dewey, but did participate in a Big Moon meeting of the Delawares at Anadarko. Normally there are many minor divergencies between meetings and tepee arrangements because there is no priesthood or dogmatic creed. As Petrullo (1934: 31) said, "A religion that insists that each individual can learn its doctrines only through personal experience with its gods must necessarily exist in a variable